



# Policy and Procedure Identifying and Supporting Students at Risk

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\*\*\*\*\* PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS POLICY IS NO LONGER IN EFFECT\*\*\*\*\*  
Please refer to "[Student Academic Progression Policy](#)"

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose**

The Academic Board has always been concerned to develop policies and procedures that promote the welfare and well being of students of the University. In particular, the Academic Board recognises the value of reliably and efficiently monitoring the progress of students in their studies, and of having systems in place to promote the early detection of students who are making poor or unsatisfactory progress and are therefore at risk of exclusion from their award course.

An obvious benefit of early detection of students in this 'at risk' category is that it allows timely intervention, and the provision of advice and assistance to support students in their ongoing studies. Another benefit of early detection and intervention is that it may reduce the number of students who eventually need to exercise the appeals mechanisms of the University.

### **1.2 Review of Student Appeals Provisions**

In late 2003, the Chair of the Academic Board, with the approval of Senate, engaged a consultant to review policies and practices relating to student appeals against exclusion and academic judgement. In February 2004 the consultant, Mr John Topley (a former Registrar of Griffith University), presented his report: *Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Processes*. The Report made six recommendations:

**Recommendation 1: A Comprehensive System Focussed on Student Progression.** *Exclusions and related appeals, with provisions for students to withdraw from study or defer it, should be seen as a small part of a much more comprehensive process to promote the progression of students towards securing academic awards, at an appropriate rate, and through which the University maintains its academic standard.*

**Recommendation 2: Identify and Assist At-risk Students in Good Time.** *In each faculty and centrally, procedures should be introduced to identify, appropriately early in each semester, students considered to be at risk of failure in particular subjects, to alert them to their perceived situation, and to refer them to sources of assistance to address their perceived risk. Particularly for first-year students, the potential impact on them of formal progress requirements should be periodically reiterated.*

**Recommendation 3: Base Progression on the Rate of Achievement of Credit Points.** *Progression rules should be university wide and specify the minimum rate at which students need to accumulate credit points towards qualifying for an academic award, considering their enrolled load – recognising the need in some courses to provide for whole-year progression requirements. The number of times a unit of study is attempted should not be a matter for*

~~progression rules — while recognising that, to provide equity of access, limits might be applied to re-enrolment in some units.~~

**~~Recommendation 4: One Academic Issues Resolution Process.~~**

~~The resolution of students' concerns about academic determinations, and about student appeals arising from show-cause and exclusion, should be recognised as very frequently being based on much the same grounds of academic judgement, procedural error, and personal misadventure — and be addressed through one set of organisational arrangements.~~

**~~Recommendation 5: Two Levels of Resolution of Appeals.~~**

~~There should be one process provided for final resolution of those matters in each faculty, and another at University level for final resolution of any appeals against faculty determinations.~~

**~~Recommendation 6: One Senate Academic Appeals Committee.~~**

~~There should be one Senate Academic Appeals Committee, replacing the current Senate academic and exclusions appeals committees, to hear such appeals finally in the University. It should comprise experienced academic staff and experienced students, prepared for the work, sitting in panels of three.~~

## **~~2. PRELIMINARY~~**

### **~~2.1 Commencement and Coverage~~**

~~This Policy and Procedure commences on 1 January 2007. It replaces all previous policies relating to academic progression by students enrolled in coursework and research award courses, to the extent that any such policies are inconsistent with this Policy and Procedure.~~

### **~~2.2 Authority~~**

~~This Policy and Procedure was approved in principle by the Academic Board on 14 December 2005 subject to the development and successful trial of the FlexSIS capabilities. With the completion of the FlexSIS developments and a successful trial by the faculties of Economics and Business and Pharmacy, the Academic Board is asked to approve the full implementation of the Policy and Procedures to commence on 1 January 2007.~~

### **~~2.3 Application~~**

~~This Policy and Procedure set out the principles and processes to be followed by Faculties in detecting and dealing with students who might be categorised as At Risk.~~

~~This Policy and Procedure should be read in conjunction with the formal instruments governing exclusions and appeals for students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate coursework and research award courses, including:~~

- ~~the University of Sydney (Student Appeals against Academic Decisions) Rule 2006;~~
- ~~the University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2000 (as amended); and~~
- ~~the University of Sydney (Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)) Rule 2004 Resolutions of the Academic Board;~~
- ~~Principles for Student Appeals Against Academic Decisions;~~
- ~~Procedures for Student Appeals against Academic Decisions for Undergraduate Coursework and Postgraduate Coursework Awards; and~~
- ~~Procedures for Student Appeals Against Academic Decisions for Postgraduate Research Awards.~~

## 2.4 Definitions

In this Policy and Procedure:

**Academic Adviser** means an academic employee nominated by the Dean of a Faculty to provide advice on matters of student progression;

**At Risk** means at risk of exclusion from the award course;

**At Risk Report** means a report listing all students within a Faculty determined to be At Risk, produced by the Faculty at the end of each semester in accordance with clause 4.1.4;

**Award course** means a formal course of study that will see attainment of a recognised award from the University.

**Progression Profile** means a record of all relevant documentation pertaining to a student's At Risk status, including warning letter, Staying on Track Surveys etc. A student's Progression Profile will be supplemented by the Faculty with each intervention, producing a record of the student's At Risk history. The Progression Profile will be attached to the student file;

**Progression Rate** means the rate at which a student accrues credit in their award course over a defined period;

**Progress Requirement(s)** means the requirement for a student to achieve an overall minimum rate of accrual of credit in their award course over a defined period, as specified by the Faculty;

**Progression Rules** means the progression rates and progression requirements approved by the Academic Board for each Faculty;

**Progression (towards completion)** means the progress made by a student towards completion of their award course, measured by comparing the number of credit points achieved with the number of credit points required for completion of the award course, taking into account the maximum period for completion;

**Staying on Track Information Session** will be held every lunch hour for a full week in each semester to provide At Risk students with information to assist them in their studies in accordance with clause 4.5.7. Attendance will be recorded at each Information Session;

~~**Staying on Track Survey** means a survey for completion by all At Risk students within a Faculty, in accordance with clauses 4.5.3, 4.5.4, 4.5.5 and 4.5.6;~~

~~**Staying on Track Survey (Stage 2)** means a survey for completion by At Risk students within a Faculty identified as Stage 2 At Risk, in accordance with clauses 4.6.2, 4.6.3 and 4.6.4;~~

~~**Weighted Average Mark (or WAM)** is the average mark obtained over a nominated set of units of study weighted according to one or more characteristics of those units.~~

### ~~3. POLICY~~

~~The University of Sydney is committed to early identification and support of students At Risk.~~

~~The University promotes the progression of students At Risk by:~~

- ~~• regularly and effectively advising students of Progress Requirements;~~
- ~~• identifying students At Risk;~~
- ~~• alerting students that they are At Risk;~~
- ~~• providing assistance to address the Risk; and~~
- ~~• tracking the progress of students after they are identified as being At Risk.~~

### ~~4. PROCEDURE~~

#### ~~4.1 Principles~~

~~4.1.1 The University's approach to identifying and supporting students At Risk will be: equitable; consistent; procedurally fair; respectful of privacy; timely; and effective.~~

~~4.1.2 Faculties will ensure that they have clear and transparent internal processes for handling students At Risk, consistent with this Policy and Procedure.~~

~~4.1.3 Faculties will be proactive in identifying students At Risk, and are responsible for tracking student Progression and keeping appropriate records.~~

#### ~~4.2 Progression~~

~~4.2.1 In order to progress through an award course, students are required to:~~

~~4.2.1.1 achieve the minimum Progression Rate specified by the Faculty;~~

- ~~4.2.1.2 pass the number of units of study specified by the Faculty as the minimum for a defined period; and~~
- ~~4.2.1.3 pass any field or clinical work, practicum, or other unit of study mandated by the Faculty.~~
- ~~4.2.2 The Faculty will submit their progression rules to the Academic Board for assessment and endorsement.~~
- ~~4.2.3 The University will monitor Progression through reports generated by FlexSIS on each student's:~~
  - ~~4.2.3.1 Progression rate;~~
  - ~~4.2.3.2 Progress towards completion; and~~
  - ~~4.2.3.3 completion of, or failure to complete, a mandated unit of study, field or clinical work, or practicum.~~
- ~~4.2.4 Faculties will ascertain a student's Progression by any or all of the following means:~~
  - ~~4.2.4.1 student attendance at compulsory teaching and assessment components of a unit of study;~~
  - ~~4.2.4.2 failure of a student to pass a number of units of study set as the required target for that award course;~~
  - ~~4.2.4.3 over-enrolment in an attempt to catch up on failed units of study;~~
  - ~~4.2.4.4 significant negative variations in a student's academic performance;~~
  - ~~4.2.4.5 other progress requirements specific to the Faculty.~~
- ~~4.2.5 Where the attendance record of a student is deemed by the Faculty to be unsatisfactory, that information will be entered by the Faculty into FlexSIS.~~
- ~~4.2.6 Relevant Faculty staff will be permitted to access and review information recorded in FlexSIS and create reports as required.~~
- ~~4.2.7 Faculties will continue to be responsible for tracking the progress of research postgraduates as long as FlexSIS is unable to automate detection for non-coursework students.~~

### **4.3 Triggers for identifying students 'At Risk'**

- ~~4.3.1 The University will use the following triggers, as a minimum, to identify students At Risk:~~
  - ~~4.3.1.1 failure by a student to successfully complete more than fifty percent of the credit points for which the student was enrolled in the semester or year (as appropriate) just completed;~~
  - ~~4.3.1.2 failure by a student to achieve a satisfactory Weighted Average Mark (WAM) in the award course over a defined period, as specified by the Faculty;~~

~~4.3.1.3 failure by a student to complete a mandated unit of study, field or clinical work, or practicum, as appropriate;~~

~~4.3.1.4 failure twice by a student to pass the same unit of study;~~

~~4.3.1.5 unsatisfactory student attendance record as entered in FlexSIS by faculties; or~~

~~4.3.1.6 inability of a student to complete their award course within the maximum permitted time while carrying a normal student load.~~

*[Note: 4.3.1.6 will be applicable in 2007.]*

#### **4.4 Report**

~~4.4.1 At the end of each semester, Faculties will generate an At Risk report from FlexSIS and after consulting Faculty records will produce a list of students who are potentially At Risk.~~

~~4.4.2 The Faculty will create a Progression Profile for each student listed in the At Risk Report. The Faculty will update the Progression Profile for any subsequent Faculty intervention.~~

#### **4.5 Stage 1**

~~4.5.1 The Faculty will send all students listed in the At Risk Report for the first time a letter and a Staying on Track Survey. The letter will advise each student:~~

~~4.5.1.1 that they have been identified as At Risk;~~

~~4.5.1.2 how they have been identified as At Risk;~~

~~4.5.1.3 that they are required to:~~

~~—— (i) —— complete a Staying on Track Survey; and~~

~~—— (ii) —— attend a Staying on Track Information Session.~~

~~4.5.1.4 that all correspondence and documents relating to their At Risk status will be recorded on their Progression Profile;~~

~~4.5.1.5 that, in the case of the student being enrolled in an award course of two years or less (full-time) duration, they are also required to:~~

~~(i) —— consult an Academic Advisor in their Faculty; and~~

~~(ii) —— attend a Staying on Track Information Session.~~

~~4.5.2 Faculties may also require students to consult an Academic Advisor~~

~~4.5.3 All At Risk students will be expected to complete a Staying on Track Survey.~~

~~4.5.4 The Staying on Track Survey will invite each student to identify and explain any reasons for their academic performance in the preceding semester(s) being of a standard that caused them to be identified as an At Risk student. Where a student does not want to disclose the~~

~~reasons because they consider them to be private, the student will be invited to consult the University's Counselling Service to discuss the issue. The Faculty will liaise with the relevant counsellor to confirm whether the student's reasons are valid, without breaching the student's privacy.~~

~~4.5.5 The Staying on Track Survey will include details of the relevant support services available at the University, including the University Counselling, the Learning Centre, the International Student Support Unit and University Health Services, and relevant student association representatives. The Survey will advise students to avail themselves of these services.~~

~~4.5.6 Each student who receives a Staying on Track Survey will be expected to acknowledge that they are aware of the University assistance available to them.~~

~~4.5.7 The Staying on Track Information Session will cover study skills and introduce students to remedial learning services, counselling services and relevant student association representatives.~~

~~4.5.8 The Faculty will record on the Progression Profile whether the student responds to the Staying on Track Survey and has attended a Staying on Track Information Session.~~

## **4.6 Stage 2**

~~4.6.1 The Faculty will send all students listed in an At Risk Report for the second time a warning letter and a Staying on Track Survey (Stage 2). Students enrolled in award programs of two years or less (full time) duration should proceed directly to stage 3. The warning letter will advise each student:~~

~~4.6.1.1 that they have been identified as At Risk for the second time;~~

~~4.6.1.2 how they have been identified as At Risk for the second time;~~

~~4.6.1.3 that all correspondence and documents relating to their At Risk status will be recorded on their Progression Profile; and~~

~~4.6.1.4 that they are required to:~~

~~—— (i) —— complete an Staying on Track Survey (Stage 2);~~

~~—— (ii) —— consult an Academic Adviser in their Faculty, and~~

~~—— (iii) —— attend a Staying on Track Information Session, if they have not already done so.~~

~~4.6.2 The Staying on Track Survey (Stage 2) will invite each student to identify and explain any reasons for their academic performance in the preceding semester(s) being of a standard that caused them to be identified as an At Risk student. It will also ask that they provide information about any support services or other relevant remedial action they may have taken since they were identified as Stage 1 At Risk.~~

~~4.6.3 The Staying on Track Survey (Stage 2) will require students to consult with their year advisor or Associate Dean.~~

~~4.6.4 Each student who receives a Staying on Track Survey (Stage 2) will be expected to acknowledge that they are aware of the University assistance available to them.~~

~~4.6.5 The Faculty will record on the Progression Profile whether the student consults an Academic Adviser and attends a Staying on Track Information Session.~~

### ~~4.7 Stage 3~~

~~4.7.1 All students listed in an At Risk Report for the third time (or second time in the case of students in award programs of two years full time or less duration) will be asked to show good cause why they should not be excluded from their award course.~~

~~4.7.2 Faculties will consider and rule on whether a student has shown good cause in accordance with Division 6 of the *University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2000 (as amended)*.~~

~~4.7.3 Where a student has not established good cause, a Dean may, in accordance with clause 16 of the *University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2000 (as amended)*:~~

~~4.7.3.1 exclude the student from the relevant course; or~~

~~4.7.3.2 permit the student to re-enrol in the relevant award course subject to restrictions on units of study, which may include, but are not restricted to: completion of a unit or units of study within a specified time; exclusion from a unit or units of study; and specification of the earliest date on which a student may re-enrol in a unit or units of study.~~

~~4.7.4 Faculties will normally provide reasons for their decisions and record those reasons on the progression profile.~~

~~*[Note: Faculties must notify the International Office of any decision to exclude an International Student. The International Office will have access to FlexSIS for the purpose of meeting the University's Statutory reporting obligations.]*~~

### ~~4.8 Stage 4~~

~~4.8.1 All students listed in an At Risk Report for the fourth time, after having been asked to Show Cause and permitted to re-enrol, will be automatically excluded from their award course.~~

### ~~4.9 Appeals~~

~~4.9.1 A two level appeals process will be available to students, as recommended in the Topley Report.~~

~~4.9.2—A student who:~~

~~4.9.2.1 has been listed in an At Risk Report for the third time and who has been excluded from their award course (Stage 3); or~~

~~4.9.2.2 has been listed in an At Risk Report for the fourth time and automatically excluded (Stage 4);~~

~~will be entitled to appeal against the decision of the Faculty in accordance with the **Resolutions of the Academic Board:**~~

- ~~• Student appeals against academic decisions; Principles for Student Appeals Against Academic Decisions;~~
- ~~• Procedures for Student Appeals against Academic Decisions for Undergraduate Coursework; and~~
- ~~• Postgraduate Coursework Awards; and Procedures for Student Appeals Against Academic Decisions for Postgraduate Research Awards.~~

~~4.9.3—Students will be entitled to appeal to the Student Appeals Body in accordance with the University of Sydney (Student Appeals against Academic Decisions) Rule 2006.~~

## **4.10 Transitional Arrangements**

~~Subject to any existing faculty arrangements which are otherwise consistent with this policy, in the first year of operation of this Policy, Faculties will implement the Four Stage process in accordance with the following transitional arrangements:~~

~~4.10.1—Students who appear on a Faculty's 'At Risk' report but have never been asked to 'Show Cause' (including those students who have previously received a warning letter) will be treated by the Faculty as being at Stage 1 of the process;~~

~~4.10.2—Students who appear on a Faculty's 'At Risk' report and have previously been asked to 'Show Cause' on one or more occasions will be treated by the Faculty as being at Stage 3 of the process.~~